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Now Playing: Web 2.0

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Now Playing: Web 2.0

Posted on **December 1, 2007** by **Editor**



By **Michael Geraci** <geracim@pacificu.edu>

[About](#)

If you caught my [last article](#) in *Interface*, you know that I have become a big fan of Wikis as groupware, particularly in an educational setting. Shortly after writing that article, it struck me that I may have missed the bigger picture in terms of where and how Wikis arrived on the collective radars of the Web surfing masses.

This whole notion of an online service providing software-like functionality is really the “meta concept” behind this thing that has been called Web 2.0. Wikis were the first, and perhaps the easiest to grasp tools that appeared in this natural evolution of the Web. Blogs and podcasts followed, and before long, we were hearing about tag clouds, folksonomies, mash ups and social networks.

There are already rumors of a Web 3.0 on the near horizon. So before we go and start treating the Web like our favorite piece of commercial software, let us take a moment to assess just what Web 2.0 means to the Web using public.

It has been said that Web 2.0 is really just a marketing ploy used to hype the current pool of “hot Web startups” that harkens back to the *dot com boom* and subsequent *bust* around the turn of the century. I do not believe this to be the case. Though the term is often brandished like a generic label for “that which is cool on the Internet” this, to me, feels like the same old story of the corporate brand machine latching on to real ground swells in the technical landscape, and dumbing them down to their most recognizable features. Blogs, a subset of the Web 2.0 movement, went through this when big media—everyone from your local radio station to the Wall Street Journal—decided that they too should join this movement *du jour* and suddenly blogs lost some of their grassroots sheen and became just another “Web thing” that we hear about on a regular basis.

But this Web 2.0 thing is not a single technology, color scheme, or a zippy Web interface. The hallmarks of the new Web are social in nature, and this represents a fundamental paradigm shift

in how it is built and how we experience it as users. So instead of saying, Web 2.0 relies on progressively more powerful technologies like AJAX, RSS, and XML, I am inclined, along with [Time Magazine](#), to point out that people, specifically users, are at heart of the Web's current status.

First, the new Web is a group computing platform unto itself. Software that used to need to be purchased, installed and maintained on multiple computers now exists, for free, on the Web. Wikis certainly reflect this, but so too does [flickr](#), the online photo sharing service, [Digg](#), the social news site, and [Google Documents](#), a reasonable online, group-enabled version of Microsoft's ubiquitous office suite. Never before have we been so empowered to work, learn, create and share information with nothing installed on our computers other than a Web browser.

Next, there is an inherent trust in the wisdom of the masses and altruism in Web 2.0. Again, the Wiki, in the shape of the Wikipedia, demonstrates this. Sure we can debate the veracity of Wikipedia "wisdom", but there is no denying that its millions of users have an interest in seeing it succeed; thus the notion that the altruism of the masses can quickly overcome the rogue actions of the few. [The Open Directory Project](#), brought to you by the same folks that brought you the Firefox Web browser, aims to provide the Web's largest human-edited subject directory. This project has been so successful that it supplies "directory search" results to Google, Alta-Vista, AOL and other big names in the search world.

Beyond the knowledge gathering space, there is [del.icio.us](#), [yelp](#) and [angie's list](#). All these Web 2.0 properties bring us the collective wisdom and opinion of those that we have something in common with. For example, on [del.icio.us](#), I can find the favorite Web sites of those that share my profession, my hobbies, and my research interests through a system of user-generated "tags"—keywords that provide a taxonomy to the information, thus the term *folksonomy*—applied to bookmarked Web sites. Yelp lets me know where people in my current geographical location like to eat, drink, shop, learn and get a haircut, among other things. While Angie's list tells me what service providers (plumbers, roofers, etc.) are crowd favorites in my region. We've got a wealth of information at our fingertips, and for the first time ever it comes not from the providers, but from the users.

Lastly Web 2.0 means scalable and modular. Bits and pieces of functionality from Web 2.0 services can easily be replicated and accessed on other sites. For example, Google's groundbreaking mapping system is easily transported to other sites (including our blogs and Wikis), and repurposed. Need directions to my office? Just open the Google map on my page and input your starting location. This is made even more robust by developers who combine (*mash-up*) these modular technologies with their own features and functions. [Frappr](#) for example, uses Google's mapping system, but allows users to "push pin" their own location into a specific map. Each pin can contain photos and biographical information about that person or location. Frappr maps, once created, can be dropped into our own sites to display such things as where our clients, family, friends, etc. are located in the world.

This modularity is seen throughout the Web on pages that contain the growing row of buttons and badges that say things like “Digg it”, “add to del.icio.us”, and “**Sphere it**”—all services that connect the content you are looking at to a quasi-organized system that is shared and validated publicly in real-time.

What does it all mean? It means that the Web is getting interesting. Content is flowing from the top-down *and* the bottom-up, and in the process it is being filtered through myriad channels and ranking systems. On the tech side, it means that the underlying architecture of the Web is also becoming a highly stabilized and layered system that can be called into action for small and large tasks alike. Finally, it means that we can all become active participants in culture, not just *tech* culture, but honest to goodness culture; but instead of being somewhat confined to a single geographical location, we are participating in a global culture that for the first time is easily accessible and enriched through network technologies. It is a big shift in our thinking, and not everybody is comfortable with such a concept, but it is happening before our eyes, and just as in traditional society, you can be amazed by it or repulsed. Either way, it is worth watching.

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11 THOUGHTS ON “NOW PLAYING: WEB 2.0”

Pastor Gus fire And water

on **February 5, 2014 at 12:22 AM** said:

Hello there, just became aware of y^our blog through Google, and found that it's truly informative. I am gonna watch out for brussels. I'll appreciate if you continue this in future. Many people will be benefited from your writing. Cheers!

christian ministry domestic hate group

on **February 6, 2014 at 12:47 AM** said:

Very good info. Lucky me I discovered Y^our website by chance (stumbleupon). I have bookmarked it f^or later!

christian church mesa Az

on **February 6, 2014 at 2:43 AM** said:

Hello friends, pleasant post and fastidious urging commented here, I am really enjoying by these.

sales training jobs dubai

on **February 6, 2014 at 3:34 AM** said:

It's amazing to pay a visit this web page and reading the views of all friends about tthis paragraph, while I am also keen of gertting knowledge.

available christian

on **February 6, 2014 at 3:40 AM** said:

My brother recommended I may llike ths weeb site.
He used to be totally right. This post truly made my day.
You can not consider just how so much time I had
spennt for ths information! Thank you!

Consolidate Credit Cards Debt

on **February 6, 2014 at 6:02 AM** said:

When I originally commented I clicked the "Notify me when new comments are added" checkbox and now each time a comment is added I get several e-mails with tthe same comment.

Is there any way you can remove me from that service?
Cheers!

dallas quilt show 2014

on **February 6, 2014 at 8:44 AM** said:

Hi there it's me, I am also visiting this web page daily, this website iss actually nice and the visitors are iin fact sharing fastidious thoughts.

christian ministry in national parks

on **February 6, 2014 at 9:37 AM** said:

Hey I know thgis is off topic but I was wonderding if yooou knew of any wikdgets I could add to my blog tthat automatically tweet my newest twitter updates.

I've besn looking foor a plug-in lke this for quite some time and was hoping maybe you would have some experience with something like this. Please let me know if you run into anything. I truly enjoy reading your blog and I look forward to your new updates.

<http://skypelesson.ru/>

on **February 6, 2014 at 10:06 AM** said:

Wow, fantastic blog layout! How long have you been blogging for? you make blogging look easy. The overall look of yourr site is fantastic, let alone the content!

www.awardwinningwebdesign.com

on **February 6, 2014 at 10:22 AM** said:

I am not sure where you're getting your infōrmation, but greeat topic. I needfs to spend some time learning much more or understanding mōre. Thanks for excellent information I was looking for this infodmation fōr mmy mission.

saint peter new brunswick

on **February 6, 2014 at 10:56 AM** said:

I am now not certain the place you are getting your information, however great topic.
I must spend a while learning more or working out more.

Thank you for magnificent information I used to be on the lookout for this information
for
my mission.